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081422Z Dec 03

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 007952

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN REACTION TO POTUS IRAQ VISIT

Classified By: CDA David Hale for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) A sampling of Jordanian reaction to the POTUS visit to Iraq on November 27 indicates that many here believe the visit exposes low morale of U.S. forces in Iraq in need of a boost and pre-election posturing intended for U.S. consumption. Press reaction was light yet critical, while military contacts were solidly behind the President's efforts and believe it will have a positive effect on the Iraqi people. End Summary.

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POLITICAL "PRE-ELECTION" POSTURING  
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2. (C) Jordanians outside of government whom we talked to viewed the President's Thanksgiving day visit to Iraq as a "public relations" pre-election ploy staged for U.S. voters. Many believed that the "stealthy" trip exposed the failure of U.S. forces to stabilize security in Iraq and their need for a "presidential" morale boost.

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PRESS REACTION: LIGHT YET CRITICAL  
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3. (C) On December 1, center-left daily Al-Dustour wrote that President Bush had to visit Iraq in total secrecy due to the "crisis and state of chaos" in the country. The daily also criticized the President's meetings with Americans while sidestepping average Iraqis. It called the "American Thanksgiving in Iraq" a deception intended for the American people in contrast to the reality of the Iraqi street where U.S. soldiers are dying on a daily basis.

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MILITARY CONTACTS: ENCOURAGED BY VISIT  
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4. (C) Contrary to this editorial, contacts within the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) present an opposite opinion. JAF counterparts are solidly behind the efforts by the President, are encouraged by his willingness to visit Iraq, and believe the visit will have a positive effect on the Iraqi people. Military interlocutors nearly unanimously state that it is an illustration of the courage of the Administration. They believe that the visit showed the personal desire of the President to reach a solution to the conflict, and that his presence may illustrate to the Iraqi people that the U.S. is intent to see the political transition through to its conclusion.

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COMMENT  
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5. (C) For those Jordanians who noticed the President's trip, most put it in the context of troop morale building and U.S. domestic politics, not an effort to help the rebuilding of Iraq.

6. (U) CPA Baghdad minimize considered.

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HALE